

- DRAFT -

**MINUTES**  
**Town Meeting Electronic Voting Committee**

**Date:** Feb. 19, 2015 (First meeting)  
**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at  
7:10pm, in the Town Room of  
Amherst Town Hall

**Committee Members In Attendance:**  
Jim Pistrang,), Mandi Jo Hanneke  
(At-Large), , Jonathan O'Keefe (At  
Large), Alan Powell (TMCC Rep.),  
Chris Riddle (At Large), Sean  
Hannon (IT Staff), Sandra Burgess  
(Town Clerk)

**Others Participating:** Andy Steinberg (Selectboard  
Rep.)

**Action Items:** In Red

**[Items in Brackets]:** Post-meeting information  
Added by secretary

**Agenda:**

- a. Introductions
- b. Elect a Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary
- c. Review the Committee Charge
- d. Review the Proposed Timeline
- e. Review the Proposed Subcommittees
- f. Assign informal subcommittees
- g. Discuss appearance before JCPC scheduled for Thursday, March 5 at 9:30 am
- h. Set dates and agendas for future meetings
- i. Public Comment (if any)

**Discussion:**

1. **Call to Order:**
2. **Committee Action:** We unanimously elected the following officers:
  - a. Chair: Jim Pistrang
  - b. Vice Chair: Alan Powell
  - c. Secretary: Chris Riddle
3. **Subcommittees:**
  - a. Research & Technology: Jim, Jonathan, Sean, Sandra, Alan Chris
  - b. Budget: Jim, Mandi Jo, Chris
  - c. IT & Technology: Sean, Sandra, Alan
  - d. Bylaw Revisions: Jonathan, Mandi Jo, Sandra, Chris
  - e. Town Meeting Demo: Sean, Mandi Jo, Sandra, Alan
4. **Timeline:**
  - a. This Spring: Research the systems.

- b. JCPC, March 5, 9:30 am: Jim and others will make an informational presentation to the Joint Capital Planning Committee. Give ballpark cost, but say we have no system recommendation at this time. (John Musante had recommended asking now for the money then coming back next time with the system recommendation. Jim is uncomfortable with that. He prefers this way, where we won't be trying to explain a system at TM before we know and understand the details.)
  - c. Spring 2015 TM: Make a short informational report to TM. Chris will prepare a handout, with Jim's help.
  - d. Fall 2015: Warrant article with cost to TM.
  - e. Spring 2016: Implementation.
- 5. **Research & Technology Subcommittee:**
  - a. Other Communities: Jim reported on several communities using electronic voting:
    - i. Brookline: Purchased OTI system. \$20,000. Have an annual budget of \$5,000 for staffing, batteries. No software maintenance cost.
    - ii. Arlington: Renting OTI system for \$10,000 per year. (Difference between Brookline & Arlington: Brookline has a more robust IT department.)
    - iii. Framingham: OTI.
    - iv. Billerica: Using another system.
    - v. Belmont: ?
    - vi. Wayland: Oldest one – five years ago. They have an open town meeting, so the needs are different, primarily because there's a wide range in the number of voters.
  - b. Selection Strategy: Should we limit our consideration to what's being used by other towns, or maybe also look at their 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> choices?
  - c. Field Trips: We need to visit other TM's using these systems, Brookline in particular. Jim will find out about the schedules and try to find dates that don't conflict with Amherst's spring TM.
  - d. Streaming Video: If other towns have public access TV, maybe they'll have streaming video of past TMs. [At least Arlington does: [vod.acmi.tv](http://vod.acmi.tv).-CR]
  - e. Vendors: Jonathan will begin talking to vendors. Sandra is interested in keeping track of and comparing features.
  - f. Checking In: Will be different – it will involve distributing the handheld devices.
- 6. **Budget Subcommittee**: Nothing to do for now, except perhaps the JCPC meeting.
- 7. **IT & Technology Subcommittee**: Nothing to do between now and the April meeting.
- 8. **Bylaw Revisions Subcommittee**: Jim will do a summary of which towns are using what. Then we can go to those towns' websites and collect their bylaws.
- 9. **Town Meeting Demo Subcommittee**: Nothing between now and April.
- 10. **Miscellaneous**:
  - a. Paperwork: Everyone who hasn't must get signed materials to Sandra ASAP.
  - b. Swearing In: Sandra conducted a swearing in of the members who hadn't done so already.
  - c. Open Meeting Law: Sandra gave a summary. The details are in the Appointed Committee Handbook. We may e-mail informational items to each other, but may not deliberate by email. May take field trips, but may not deliberate on the trip. We may use email to schedule meetings. Sandra will handle the postings and room reservations.

- d. Posting Minutes & Other Materials: Send to Debra Puppel. (Can't post minutes, for instance, until they have been accepted at a meeting.)
- 11. **Public Comment**: Melissa Perot, (precinct 1) asked about what was driving the creation of this committee. Any one incident, for instance?: Answer: No, just the long term desire to modernize the voting process: Less time (no voice vote, then standing vote, then tally vote), more accuracy, elimination of subjective judgments demanded of the moderator. There's also accountability, where there are differing opinions. Ms. Perot suggested that this rationale should appear in our statement to TM, on the committee website, etc.
- 12. **Adjournment**: Voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:15 pm.
- 13. **Next Meetings**: April 22, 9:30 AM, June 3, 9:30 AM. **Sandra will schedule the rooms and post.** In April we'll schedule an August meeting. There will be a September meeting.

Submitted by:  
Chris Riddle  
February 20, 2015